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THE FUNCTION OF HEAVY CHEMICAL PRODUCTS IN INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

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The best means of ensuring a continued rise in the standard of living of the inhabitants of a country is by maintaining a balance between agriculture and industrialization. The most important factor in improving agriculture is the use of fertilizers which have been made from basic chemical products, like so many other finished products; the best stimulant for complete and balanced industrialisation is the existence of a basic heavy industry.

In order to produce economically, all the products which help raise the standard of living, it is necessary to obtain certain raw materials in sufficient quantities at reasonable prices. Also, adequate technology is required: this can be obtained only through skilled personnel who know about conversion processes and who, by suitable means, can turn raw materials into products of acceptable quality.

Mexico is a country with a predominantly rural population whose livelihood depends to a great extent, upon agriculture and associated activities. Owing to the adverse natural conditions of the country, the production of cereals and other fundamental foodstuffs for the population falls far short of what is needed, and it is necessary to make good the deficit with imports. Clearly, the use of chemical fertilizers by themselves is no answer to the problem; a rational use of the soil is fundamental to any improvement of agricultural production. However, the need for chemical fertilizers is so urgent that the utmost encouragement must be given to setting up a heavy chemical industry which would also greatly benefit the country's general industrial development.

As regards basic industry in general, encouragement should be given to the production of materials with the widest application as basic materials in other processes, for example, sulphur, sulphuric acid, nitric acid, alkalis and, above all, basic materials extracted from coal and petroleum.

To make the best use of basic industries, it is desirable to train personnel in the manufacture of those products which are economically viable in existing technological conditions. In this way a proper appreciation of the different alternatives available regarding investment will become possible.

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